

## An Important Message from Jennifer Toth, Deputy Director of Transportation

### *Preventing Tragedies and Saving Lives with Seat Belts, Child-Safety Seats*

When it comes to talking about seat belts and child-safety seats, it's difficult not to talk numbers. For example, consider that 821 people were killed in fatal crashes last year in Arizona. Of that number,

- 220 were drivers not wearing a seat belt.
- 93 were passengers who were not buckled up.
- at least three of those passengers were children whose young lives were cut short because an adult did not ensure they were safely restrained with a seat belt or child safety seat.

On the flip side, 13,000 is the number of lives saved in the U.S. every year, thanks to seat belts and child-safety seats. Many of those lives are children's. In fact, vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for kids ages 1 to 13 years. The No. 1 way to prevent this tragedy, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, is using the right car seat at the right time in the right way.

So, what can you do to make a positive difference? Start by setting the right example. Always wear your seat belt every time you drive. Model the behavior you want others to follow, especially your kids. Before you start to drive, make sure all passengers are buckled up properly or properly restrained in the appropriate car seat. Remember that in addition to saving lives, child car seats are required by Arizona law. Children younger than 8 years old and under 4' 9" must be properly secured in a safety or booster seat.

Like me, you might cringe when you see someone driving with children who aren't buckled up. If you can, get the vehicle license plate number and state. When you're safely stopped, call the Buckle-Up Baby Hotline at 800.505.BABY. You can remain anonymous. You'll be asked for the vehicle information, the city you were driving in and the details of what you observed. Proper authorities will follow up by providing the driver with lifesaving tips, including information on where to find no-cost car seats.

Lastly, if you're not sure about what type of car seat your children should be in, or need help properly installing a car seat, just ask. Across Arizona, no-cost Child-Safety Seat Stations are set up to help people just like you. I can assure you they'd rather assist you and your children this way than at a crash scene. Because when it comes to talking about the number of fatalities, the one we should strive for, is **zero**.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. T. R.' or similar, with a stylized, cursive script.